

Thirteen Ways To Apprehend Our Quetzal in Good Faith

For Wallace Stevens

GARY FRANCISCO KELLER

I

In the beginning Xochiquetzal
and Mixcoatl mated
SkySerpent and QuetzalBlossom bore ire
wind, the florid war
our poet-god Quetzalcoatl, banished
to the eastern sea on a raft of serpents

II

Our quetzal is the go-between
a god, a goddess, a guardian
She is our conserver's cause,
He is our uncaused causer

Gary Francisco Keller ha sido poeta y cuentista por más de cuarenta años. En 1973, Keller fundó y actualmente dirige la Editorial Bilingüe/Bilingual Press que publica la Revista Bilingüe/Bilingual Review. Desde su fundación, la editorial ha servido como instrumento de publicación de centenares de libros de investigación y literatura creativa. En los actuales momentos, Keller esta trabajando en una novela de ficción con un fondo mexicanoamericano e internacional.

III

Our quetzal is drawing down from heaven
his erect tailfeathers mark earth's spot
Our quetzal is skimming the emerald cloudforest
his fluted tailfeather foreshadows our fecund life

IV

At first our quetzal was as pure blue
as turquoise mountain water
But Tecún Umán fell to the conquistador
The godbird lit upon the crimson wound
Breast to breast, warbler to warrior
His chestfeathers dyed with Maya blood

V

Mis movimiento poetas de Aztlán
Why do you conjure the águila or colibrí?
Our twin-gendered quetzal beckons you
return to amatl and sculpted stone.

VI

A man and a woman
Are one
A man, a woman, a plumed serpent
Are one

VII

Tres quetzales roost apart in an aguacatillo tree
She chooses one and sets the other free
¡Let it be me! ¡Let it be me!

VIII

I was of three minds
In the corona of a tree
perched two eager machos
their female arbiter and me

IX

I do not know which to prefer,
the indiscretion of direction
or the discretion of indirection
The resplendent male plunging from on high
or our feathered flower goddess proving fertility

X

In the swaying misty cloudforest
the only still solidary life
is one carefully concealed quetzal

XI

The macho is in our nest
Parenting the brood
his outsized virile tailfeather
turns upon itself

XII

It was drizzling in the cloudforest
It was going to drizzle
The quetzal eyed me from afar
the tiny lizard firmly in beak
She set forth to a higher nest
to nourish our young

XIII

There is no thirteenth way
The faith of bad faith
is a feckless faith
Cage not my quetzal
We know no justice
But poetic justice